

Though the state of things among the Christians is not nearly so bad as in some of the Syrian valleys, the shadow of the Kurd is over this paradise. The Armenians complain of robbery with violence as being of constant occurrence, and that they have been plundered till they are unable to pay the taxes, and it is obvious that travellers, unless in large companies, are not safe without a Government escort." In each village the common sheepfold is guarded from sunset to sunrise by a number of men—a heavy burden on villagers whose taxation should ensure them sufficient protection from marauders.

In one of the fairest bays on this south side of the lake is the island rock of Akhtamar, crowned with a church and monastery built of red sandstone. The convent boat, which plies daily to the mainland for supplies, is available for travellers. Eleven monks with their pupils inhabit the rock. It is a very ancient foundation, dating from A.D. 633, and the church is attributed to the Armenian King Kakhik, who reigned in the tenth century. It is a cruciform building, with a hexagonal tower and a conical terminal at the intersection of the cross. The simple interior is decorated with some very rude pictures, and a gilded throne for the Patriarch stands at the east end. This Patriarchate of Akhtamar, the occupant of which has at times claimed the title of *Catlwlicos*, was founded in 1113 by an archbishop of Akhtamar who declared himself independent of the *Catlwlicos* of the Armenian Church who

resides in  
Echmiadzin, but at the present time he has  
only a few  
adherents in the immediate neighbourhood  
of Van, and  
has the reputation of extreme ignorance,  
and of being  
more of a fanner than an ecclesiastic. He  
was at  
Haikavank, at the fine farm on the mainland  
possessed  
by the convent, but we had not time to call.  
Plain as is the interior of the Church of  
Akhtamar,